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# Inside Information

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## INSIDE THIS "INSIDE"

Page

VP and GM of WETACOM, Inc., a PBS WETA-TV subsidiary, to host teleconference..	2
Minnesota Forest Service experiment station "syndicates" bi-monthly column....	2
Communications specialist position available in USDA's Extension Service.....	2
'USDA Online' service is a news and current information service, not a database.....	3
John C. Obert, former USDA and Congressional communicator, dies of cancer.....	4
Government Printing Office schedules editorial planning seminar for June 8-11..	4
State Ag Department Communicators busy preparing for food & agriculture expo..	4
Entries for National Association of Government Communicators awards due May 15.....	5
Vermont to host Northeast Agricultural Communicators in education conference..	6
Western Agricultural Communicators in education workshop at North Lake Tahoe..	6
The how-to's of delivering videoconferences to colleges and universities.....	6
Information and directory available from ACE D.C. region spring workshop.....	7
'President's Management Improvement Program' government-wide videoconference..	7
Bureau of Land Management seeks public affairs specialist in California.....	8
Retired USDA photo chief and Graduate School instructor dies of lung ailment..	8

INSIDE INFORMATION is published for distribution to public affairs and information staff members of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, its agencies, State Departments of Agriculture and Land Grant Universities. Individual items are sent electronically throughout the month to all offices on the agricultural information network on the Dialcom Incorporated computer system. These items are then printed at the end of each month for distribution to all offices, including those which do not have access to the electronic mail network. Any items, comments or inquiries should be sent to Denver Browning, editor, Special Programs Division, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Room 536A, Washington, DC 20250, or send to Browning's Dialcom mailbox AGR209, or call at (202) 447-2058.

## VP AND GM OF WETACOM, INC., A PBS WETA-TV SUBSIDIARY, TO HOST TELECONFERENCE

Jane Symons, vice president and general manager of WETACOM, Inc., a subsidiary of WETA-TV, a public broadcasting station in the Washington, D.C. area, will speak at a teleconference on Thursday, April 9 from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. ET at a USDA Videoconference Ideas Forum.

Some participants will meet in conference room 1605-S to participate in the discussion with Symons; others can participate by telephone.

Symons will speak on the possibilities in downlinking or delivering a videoconference at PBS sites, the types of videoconferences now being done on the PBS network, and the networking and videoconference support available through the PBS system and WETACOM.

Call Betty Fleming, teleconference coordinator with Radio & TV Division of USDA's Office of Information, at (202) 447-5368 if you want to join the group at the Washington, D.C. site. If you are at a field location, Fleming can give you a teleconference bridge number to call a few minutes before the conference begins.

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## MINNESOTA FOREST SERVICE EXPERIMENT STATION "SYDICATIONS" BI-MONTHLY COLUMN

In an effort to get research results off the shelf and into use, public affairs specialists at the Forest Service's North Central Forest Experiment Station in St. Paul, Minnesota, are producing a bi-monthly column that is currently used by 10 different periodicals.

Called, "WOODWISE," the column summarizes interesting and useful information derived from the Station's varied research program. Subjects have ranged from modern methods of inventorying timber ("High Tech Timber Cruisers") to forest related biotechnology ("Invasion of the Somaclones").

Subscribers are local and national forestry- and conservation-oriented magazines, such as "NATIONAL WOODLANDS," "MINNESOTA FORESTS," and "MISSOURI WILDLIFE," whose readers have a down-to-earth interest in research results. Well into its second year of publication, the column has been well received by editors and readers alike.

For further information contact Bob Wray, of USDA's North Central Forest Experiment Station, at (612) 784-0233.

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## COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST POSITION AVAILABLE IN USDA'S EXTENSION SERVICE

USDA's Extension Service has announced a position for a communications specialist with broad duties as a national program leader in the area of Extension education.

The major duties will include skill in the use of electronic communications media such as radio, television, video, film, and teleconferencing; print media such as magazines, publications, and newsletters; speechwriting; and developing educational materials.

Position is a GS-1035-11/12 with promotion potential to GM-13. Candidates should send a completed SF-171 to Anita Walker, Extension Service, USDA, Room 3547-S, 14th & Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250. Telephone: (202) 475-4808.

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The announcement number is ES-87-203 and should be listed on your application. Federal employees must submit a current performance appraisal. Closing date is May 17. Applications received in postage paid envelopes will not be accepted. For further information contact Ovid Bay at (202) 447-3029, Dialcom mailbox AGS094, or Patricia Calvert at (202) 447-6133, Dialcom mailbox AGS096.

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# 'USDA ONLINE' SERVICE IS A NEWS AND CURRENT INFORMATION SERVICE, NOT A DATABASE

"USDA Online" is a computerized news and current information service available to USDA offices, land grant universities, state departments of agriculture, agricultural organizations, news media and others interested in getting USDA news releases and other information quickly.

"It is not a database in the real sense," says Stan Prochaska, chief of the Special Programs Division in USDA's Office of Information. "This means that much of the information is purged from the service within weeks, sometimes within days, after release." Some selected information is retained longer.

Reason for the explanation, according to Prochaska, is that users and potential users call asking for on-line access to year-old reports and other information released long ago through the computerized service.

"USDA Online," available through the Dialcom system, was started by USDA's Office of Information six years ago in response to USDA regional information offices, Cooperative Extension Service information offices and State Departments of Agriculture. Originally set up to provide quick access to USDA's national press releases, the service has been expanded over the years to include agency regional press releases, crop reports, summaries of outlook and situation reports, other economic and marketing reports, daily news summary ("AG a.m."), and other current information.

Here's the schedule of "USDA Online" menu items and time each is expected to be available for electronic access by Dialcom users:

AGAM	(Daily "AG a.m." News Summary).....one week
NEWS	(USDA National Press Releases).....two weeks
RNEWS	(USDA Agency Regional Press Releases).....two weeks
AGCAL	(Calendar of Upcoming Agricultural Events)....updated weekly
AGFAX	(USDA Facts about Agriculture).....updated periodically
AGINF	(How to Get Information from USDA, Others)....updated periodically
AGTRADE	(USDA Ag Trade Export/Import Information).....updated periodically
AHI	(USDA/FDA Animal Health Information).....updated periodically
FOOD	(USDA Food/Nutrition Information).....updated periodically
AMS	(Daily & Weekly Market Reports).....one week
ASCS	(Periodic Program Reports).....four weeks
CES	(State Extension Service Commodity Analyses)..four weeks
ERS	(Periodic Outlook-Situation Summaries, Etc.)..two-three months
FAS	(Trade Leads and Weekly Reports).....one week
NASS	(Crop & Livestock, Ag Prices, Etc., Reports)..four weeks
WAOB	(Monthly World Ag Supply-Demand Est. Report)..one month

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## JOHN C. OBERT, FORMER USDA AND CONGRESSIONAL COMMUNICATOR, DIES OF CANCER

John C. Obert, who went to work for USDA in 1966 as press secretary and chief speech writer for Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman, died of cancer April 13. He was 63.

From 1969 until 1979, Obert served as press secretary for Sen. Thomas J. McIntyre of New Hampshire. He returned to USDA in 1979 as senior writer on the governmental and public affairs staff of Secretary Bob Bergland.

After leaving USDA in 1981, he was a free-lance writer and editor. He once again served on the Hill, from May 1985 to December 1985, as press secretary to Sen. John Melcher of Montana.

Obert, a native of Minneapolis, graduated from the University of Minnesota and in 1956 received a Nieman Fellowship to Harvard University. He also was editor of the Park Region ECHO at Alexandria, Minn., for a number of years prior to his service with USDA and the Congress.

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## GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE SCHEDULES EDITORIAL PLANNING SEMINAR FOR JUNE 8-11

Applications are being accepted through May 25 for the spring session of the U.S. Government Printing Office's popular, no-cost Editorial Planning for Printing Production Seminar.

The semiannual, 3-1/2 day seminar, is designed for, and limited to, writers, editors and editorial assistants, (GS-1082, 1083 and 1087) from grades 5 through 11.

The seminar is based on GPO's belief that writers and editors have a responsibility to their readers and to their printed products, and that understanding and facilitating the production of their work improves its quality.

Nominations must be made through an agency training representative on a properly completed training form. Authorizations should be sent to:

Superintendent, Typography & Design Division, Room C846, U.S. Government Printing Office, 732 North Capitol Street, NW., Washington, DC 20401.

Applications will be accepted in order of receipt.

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## STATE AG DEPARTMENT COMMUNICATORS BUSY PREPARING FOR FOOD &amp; AGRICULTURE EXPO

Several COSDA (Communication Officers of State Departments of Agriculture) members will be helping with information coverage of the 1987 international Food & Agriculture Exposition in Seattle, Wash., April 29 - May 1.

Mary Beth Lang, information director for the Washington Department of Agriculture, and Dalton Hobbs, information director for the Oregon Department of Agriculture, are cochairing the information support for the big show.

The Food & Agriculture Expo is held every other year by the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture and is partially funded by USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service.

NASDA expects over 350 booths to be occupied by U.S. sellers/promoters of agricultural products. More than 400 foreign buyers have already registered. Companies from 40 states will be represented, including Armour, ConAgra, Coors, RT French, Ore-Ida, Simplot and Welch Foods.

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U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Richard Lyng, who will be attending the opening of the show at 10:30 a.m., Wednesday, April 29, is scheduled to hold a news conference just prior, at 9:30-10:00 a.m. Secretary Lyng will be on his way home from a 12-day agricultural trade visit to Japan.

The Japanese External Trade Organization has organized a 17-day food specialist mission that will spend 5 days in Washington, including the Expo.

Hobbs and Lang are refining plans for a show newsletter. Their plan is to produce a 4-page newsletter with photos in advance of the show and distribute it to exhibitors and visitors as they register.

Two-page newsletters will be produced for the second and third day of the show. Layout of the newsletter will be done with Pagemaker software, with printing done locally overnight. Copies of the newsletters will be distributed to all booths and made available to visitors at the show entrance and registration desks.

COSDA members from other States will be helping Lang and Hobbs produce the newsletter and providing help to the news media covering the huge show. They are already busy pulling together information for the press kit, which will be sent to members of the National Association of Farm Broadcasters, Northwest region news media and other selected print media.

Reggie Hall, information director for the South Carolina Department of Agriculture, will be helping with videotape coverage. He'll help Jim Johnson, chief of USDA's Radio & Television Division, get footage for use in USDA's television news programs.

NASDA has selected PR Newswire to electronically distribute the 1987 Food & Agriculture Expo news to editors around the United States and the world. Hobbs says they expect to send two or three major national releases to the 750 newsrooms on PR Newswire's US2 service, but more often plan to use the regional and state newslines to send localized releases featuring specific companies and states.

Hobbs is offering "prizes, glory and fame" to the COSDA member who writes the flashiest lead for their state advance news release about the show. He's asked state ag information directors to send a copy of the news release to him.

Lang, working primarily with broadcasters, reports that the Western Region of NAFB will be holding its annual meeting May 1-3 in Seattle. She says that Gary Stewart, Northwest Ag News Network, expects about 30 attendees. Stewart has invited COSDA members working at the NASDA show to join the NAFB group for its Friday evening dinner event.

Anyone needing more information may contact Mary Beth Lang, Washington Department of Agriculture, 406 General Administration Building AX-41, Olympia, WA 98504, telephone (206) 586-6108, or Dialcom electronic mailbox SDA470.

Or contact Dalton Hobbs, Oregon Department of Agriculture, 635 Capital Northeast, Salem, OR 97310, telephone (503) 378-3773.

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#### ENTRIES FOR NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATORS AWARDS DUE MAY 15

Entries for the 1987 Blue Pencil and Gold Screen Awards are due May 15, for works completed in 1986.

Sponsored by the National Association of Government Communicators (NAGC), the Blue Pencil Awards are presented to outstanding government publications and their producers. The Gold Screen Awards are presented to outstanding government audiovisual productions.

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Competitions are open to communicators in Federal, State, and local government, as well as private producers who have worked with government communicators.

For additional information, or a copy of the entry form, contact: NAGC, 80 S. Early Street, Alexandria, VA 22304, or telephone (703) 823-4821.

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#### VERMONT TO HOST NORTHEAST AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATORS IN EDUCATION CONFERENCE

The Living/Learning Center on the University of Vermont campus in Burlington, will be the site of the 1987 conference of the Northeast Region of Agricultural Communicators in Education (ACE), May 31 to June 3.

Called the Green Mountain Getaway, the conference will feature many informative sessions as well as tours. Larry Quinn, chief of the Video and Film Division in USDA's Office of Information will conduct a session on Audio/Video Conferencing and Satellite Communication.

Registration fee is \$60 for ACE members, and \$105 for non-ACE member (includes \$45 ACE membership).

For further information and registration, send check made out to Northeast ACE, to: LaRae Donnellan, 205 Morrill Hall, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT 05405-0106, by April 30. LaRae's phone number is (802) 656-3024.

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#### WESTERN AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATORS IN EDUCATION WORKSHOP AT NORTH LAKE TAHOE

The CalNeva Lodge at North Lake Tahoe, Nevada, will be the site of the Western Region Agricultural Communicators in Education (ACE) Workshop, being held May 11-13.

There will be three days of instruction, interaction, and interesting discussions, including desktop publishing and interactive video.

Registration fee before May 1, is \$50 for ACE members and \$65 for non-members. After May 1, fee is \$60 for members, \$75 for non-members.

Make checks payable to ACE Western Workshop, and return to: Dave King, Agricultural Communications, AdS 416T, Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR 97331. Telephone (503) 754-3615, or Dialcom mailbox AGS1951.

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#### THE HOW-TO'S OF DELIVERING VIDEOCONFERENCES TO COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

In the May 14 session of the current Videoconference Idea Forum series being offered by the Teleconference Center in USDA's Office of Information, from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. EDT, participants will learn about delivering or "downlinking" satellite videoconferences to colleges and universities. More and more downlinking is possible this way, according to Betty Fleming, Coordinator of the Teleconference Center, and it has some distinct advantages for those looking for field viewing sites.

Dr. E. Marie Oberle, Director of the National University Teleconference Network (NUTN) at Oklahoma State University, will explain how that organization helps its members and others line up universities as receive sites for videoconferences.

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Jan Williams, Employee Development Specialist with USDA's Office of Personnel (OP) training branch, will describe how her office, working with the USDA Teleconference Center, downlinked a successful December 1986 USDA-wide training conference for managers -- the first of its kind.

If you are in the Washington, D.C. area and wish to attend the session, it will be held in conference room 1605 in USDA's South Building. Plan to arrive 15 minutes early so you can see some video clips from both NUTN and the OP conference. If you are in a field location and would like to participate in this series by audioconference, call Betty Fleming at (202) 447-5368, and she will assign you a teleconferencing bridge number.

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#### INFORMATION AND DIRECTORY AVAILABLE FROM ACE D.C. REGION SPRING WORKSHOP

The 10th Annual ACE D.C. Region Spring Workshop was held April 10, at the Capitol Holiday Inn, in Washington, D.C. It was co-sponsored by USDA's Office of Information. Nearly 130 USDA and other government and related communications personnel attended. Response was excellent.

A limited supply of complete registration kits is available, if a state or regional ACE organization would find one of interest. Also, copies of the first edition of a pilot effort: the "ACE D.C. Networking Directory," and an "ACE Highlighter's Sheet" describing some of the top ideas/content of the meeting are available to any USDA communications or telecommunications co-workers, one (each) per person.

Write to Betty Fleming, USDA Teleconference Center, OGPA-OI, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Room 1614-S, Washington, DC 20250 (phone 202-447-5368). Or, contact Denver Browning, Dialcom AGR209.

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#### 'PRESIDENT'S MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM' GOVERNMENT-WIDE VIDEOCONFERENCE

Jim Miller, Director, and other key Office of Management and Budget, and President's Council on Management Improvement officials will make new, update announcements and provide background information on "The President's Management Improvement Program" in a national, government-wide videoconference. The program will be sent by satellite from USDA's Teleconference Center to 26 Federal Executive Board (FEB) sites. State and local officials, members of the private sector, and college and university officials may also be invited to attend the conference at these sites.

If USDA field staff, colleges and universities, or others would like to set up receive sites for this videoconference, here are the details you need to know:

-- Satellite: Spacenet 1, Transponder 1 Horizontal, Channel 1, frequency 3720 Mhz, and 6.2 and 6.8 audio

-- Date: Friday, May 1, 1987

-- Time: 10:30 to 11 a.m. EDT (test signal)  
11 a.m. to noon EDT (videoconference)

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-- Note: A phone is not needed. Some FEB sites will be pre-selected for interaction.

Many colleges and universities have the capability to receive such video-conferences and provide the necessary video projection for a group. Cable and public broadcasting stations could help. Hotels, motels, portable downlink receive units, and home satellite receivers are other possibilities.

Please let the USDA Teleconference Center know if you plan to downlink this videoconference. Call Betty Fleming at (202) 447-5368.

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#### BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT SEEKS PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST IN CALIFORNIA

The Bureau of Land Management is looking for a GS-1035-11 public affairs specialist. The position is located in Susanville, California.

For further information, telephone: (916) 978-4807, or FTS 460-4807.

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#### RETIRED USDA PHOTO CHIEF AND GRADUATE SCHOOL INSTRUCTOR DIES OF LUNG AILMENT

Eldridge C. Purdy, a retired chief of the Photography Division of USDA's Office of Information, died April 24, of a lung ailment. He was 85.

Purdy organized and taught photography classes in USDA's Graduate School for 30 years, and use color photography to help set up the standardization of the grading of eggs, meat and poultry.

Purdy retired in 1975.

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